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MEMORANDUM

FOR

CHURCH DEFENCE CONFERENCE

AT LAMBETH PALACE,

ON

MARCH 28, 1881.



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The Liberation Society has published its scheme for depriving the Church of England of her property. Its chief proposals are as follows :—

I. As regards the Bishops and Clergy.

“ All the holders of Ecclesiastical offices in the Establishment should be released from obligation to the State to discharge their present duties, and they should be dealt with in the same way as other public officials whose services are no longer required by the State.” (Section 9.)

In other words it proposes that all the Bishops and Clergy should be pensioned off and ejected from their benefices at a certain fixed date provided by the Act.

II. As regards Parsonages and Glebes.

“ The annual value of them will be included in the estimate of the income of the Clergy, for which they will receive an annuity, and therefore at the certain date fixed *the pecuniary interest in them would cease*, and this part of the property be dealt with by the Commissioners in the same way as the other surplus property coming into their hands.” (Section 26.)

III. As regards Cathedrals and Churches.

“ Both ancient and modern buildings *as well as all endowments*, now appropriated to the use of the National Church, must be

regarded as national property, at the disposal of the State." (Section 13.)

"The Cathedrals, Abbeys, and other monumental buildings to be under national control, and be maintained for such purposes as Parliament may from time to time determine." (Section 14.)

"All Churches existing at the date of the passing of the first of the Church Building Acts (1818) to be deemed ancient parish Churches." These should be "vested in a parochial Board to be elected by the ratepayers, which Board shall have power to deal with them for the general benefit of the parishioners in such ways as it may determine. The power of sale at a fair valuation and under proper regulations to be given."

### The Surplus.

"The nation to decide on its appropriation with reference to the wants and feelings of the period." It may be "devoted to education—to the maintenance of the poor—to effecting great sanitary improvements—to the reduction of the national debt, or to other objects of a secular character beneficial to the whole nation." (Section 28.)

This scheme has been prepared after the gravest deliberation. A Special Committee spent two years in preparing it. They consider it feasible and just. They have the *will* to carry it out and they are now making the utmost efforts to secure the power.

The organisation constructed to effect Disestablishment is as follows :

1. A powerful central body in London abundantly supplied with funds.
2. A systematic division of England into districts for the purpose of agitation, with a trained and salaried Superintendent over each.
3. The formation in every Borough and County of selected

bodies of men actively disseminating Liberationist principles in the locality in which they reside.

4. Frequent conferences of local leaders at chosen centres to infuse unity and force of action into the movement.

5. A regular course of Lectures and Meetings year after year in the town and country districts.

6. The systematic influencing of the sources of public opinion by the local press extensively used for this purpose.

7. A vigorous opposition in and out of Parliament to any improvement or extension of the Church's work.

8. The constant reiteration of every supposed Dissenting grievance with loud and persistent demands for its removal.

9. Incessant watchfulness for any mistake on the part of Churchmen and the instant dissemination of the Liberationist version of it throughout the country.

10. The diligent and successful collection of money for carrying on the work.

[The Income of the Liberation Society for several years past has averaged over £14,000 a year.]

### How it strives to effect its purpose.

1. It acts as the medium for combining together men of opposing religious views, or of none, in promoting the common object it has in view. Romanists, Nonconformists, Secularists, are all welcome allies in this campaign.

2. It has formed or is forming in every borough, and in regularly mapped-out districts of the counties, a body of chosen men, who, under systematic direction, are actively disseminating its principles in the locality in which they reside.

3. Local newspapers are diligently worked, local influences are unsparingly invoked, to excite dissatisfaction with and opposition to the existence of a National Church amongst us. An active and well-informed body of men is thus being almost silently and gradually formed in every constituency the very existence of which

Churchmen are unaware of; or which, if attention is drawn to it, they are often willing complacently to ignore. These, when the time comes for a general election on the Church question, will be able to act with telling and unexpected force on their unprepared and self-confident opponents.

4. Life is kept up in bodies thus formed by local conferences, visits from travelling and organising secretaries, and by frequent and stimulating communications from head-quarters in London.

5. Vigorous efforts are also made to extend the movement on all sides by means of lectures, public meetings, school-room addresses, and the diligent circulation of millions of Anti-Church and misleading pamphlets and leaflets,\* through the willing co-operation of an army of voluntary tract distributors, who are now directed to saturate every town and country village with the literature of the Liberation Society. Willing aid is also given to the movement by thousands of Dissenting ministers throughout the country, and none but those who have carefully watched their proceedings can have any correct idea of the activity, extent, and force of the powerful propaganda now at work to effect the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England.

Seven years ago Mr. Miall thus stated the teaching work then lying before the Liberation Society, which since has been effectually carried out.

“We have to enlighten and educate and move the majority of the population on the subject. The work is not too large for us supposing that our spirit be equal to the undertaking. This is what we have to do—teach the people more than ever. *We are now to be a great teaching institution going from end to end of the land, seeking out all opportunities and all agencies through which and by which ideas may be transmitted from one mind to another.*”—  
Mr. EDWARD MIALL, May 1874.

\* In the year 1879 the Liberation Society circulated 3,141,767 publications, and held no less than 794 Anti-Church Lectures. From 1875 to 1879, inclusive, these Lectures amounted to 4,281.

## What Liberationists say of the Church.

The ordinary Churchman has perhaps little idea of the character which is given to the Church and the Clergy by the agents, and in the publications, of the Liberation Society, and by Dissenters generally. We append a few instances :—

Mr. E. A. Leatham, M.P. (a member of the Executive Committee of the Liberation Society), addressing the Congregational Union. in April 1880, declared that “in many parts of England persecution still awaited those who dared to dissent from the domination and authority of the Church of England,” adding, apparently that he might be clearly understood, that “in nooks and corners of the country, wherever the happiness of humble Englishmen lay in the dark hollow of the Parson’s hand, there was too often a *spirit of persecution abroad which would have gladdened the heart of the worst Stuart and the bloodiest Tudor.*”

A certain Mr. J. Duncan, a Lecturer of the Liberation Society, speaking at Morley, near Leeds, in June 1880, described the parish Clergyman as the “parish tiger”; declared that “the Parson robbed the poor,” and that his reading of English History had taught him that “the Clergy had been the spaniels and lapdogs of the nobility.”

In the *Manchester Examiner* in the month of July, 1880, a Mr. Winks was reported as asserting that “the Clergy of the Church of England had now in their possession property to the value of £6,000,000 a-year, which was originally left and set apart for the relief of the poor.”

In the *Baptist* the Church is described as “that gigantic sham which has betrayed the cause it was paid to defend.”

The *English Independent* asserted that “Nonconformists claim only to protect the nation against *the encroaching of a grasping and tyrannical sectarianism*, and in this they are entitled to expect the sympathy and help of all true Liberals.”

*Mr. Joseph Arch*, the well-known leader of the agricultural

labourers, at a meeting at Honeybourn, spoke as follows :—" The village parsons, as a rule, had been the most unmitigated evils to the country, and they had woefully neglected the education of the labourers' children, and only took this matter and that of Sunday schools in hand when Dissent crept into their parishes."

Dr. Allon, in the *British Quarterly Review* for Jan. 1881, thus writes:—

" It excites a feeling that is not altogether resentment that this little insular English Establishment, with an arrogance and intolerance which only the Church of Rome surpasses, should virtually unchurch all the non-Episcopal Churches of Christendom.

" The evil spirit of intolerance is not easily cast out. But his injuries are inflicted upon those whom he possesses; he casts them down and tears them. ' Sometimes they fall into the water and sometimes into the fire.' And so while all other Protestant Churches are making approaches to and largely realise a true Christian Brotherhood, the English Established Church stands aloof in the *hauteur* of its prerogative and isolation, unblessed and un blessing, an alien from the brotherhood of the Churches."

Speaking of the Act of Uniformity, he says:—

" Intended to prohibit all preaching, except by men in Episcopal orders, it has hermetically sealed the pulpits of the Establishment. And now, in his Paradise of Liberty, the Dissenting Abraham has to say to the tormented Dives, ' Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they that would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.' And the torment of Dives' torment is that the gulf was dug by himself."

*Reynolds' Newspaper* of March 18, 1881, a paper which has a weekly circulation of 500,000 amongst the working classes, contains the following:—

" The Peerage means, in addition, monstrous civil governmental

departments; workhouses for the relief of shameless beggars with soft, white, idle hands. It means, too, privileged classes and a most un-Biblical Priesthood; and *a system called a National Church, which is simply a sponging system*, intended, after the Peerage proper, the army, the navy, and the government offices have milked the taxes in favour of birth, *to milk the land of £10,000,000 sterling more in the shape of tithes.*”

[The whole tithes paid to the parochial Clergy according to the return of the Tithes Commissioners’ dated Dec. 31, 1880, is £2,412,684 9s. 11½*d.* per annum.]

### Testimonies to the Usefulness of Church Defence Work.

The following extracts from a few of the numerous letters of a similar character received at the office during the last few months will show how one part of the work of the Institution is carried on:—

*From an Incumbent in Cornwall.*—“I beg to enclose a P.O. Order for a subscription to the Institution, which is but a small token of my gratitude for your help, and of my appreciation of the value of the work you are doing. If you could add to your work the employment of an able and well-read Lecturer to refute such Liberation Agents as Mr. Fisher, who is a very skilful and ready debater, you will add to the debt of gratitude due from Churchmen to you.”

*From a town in Montgomeryshire.*—“I thank you most kindly for sending me the leaflets of the Church Defence Institution, and I am glad to inform you that through their aid we won the debate I told you of by 20 to 10.”

*From a town in Kent.*—“I have to thank you for the valuable papers. Our Society has been established 35 years, and to-night is the first occasion we have obtained a majority. This I attribute to the papers received from you.”

*From a Working Man in the West.*—“As I am only a working

man (compositor by trade), I am afraid I can do little. I never hear a remark made, derogatory to the Church, doctrinal or otherwise, without challenging it; and with the aid of your admirable pamphlets, I hope to do more."

*From a Vicar in Yorkshire.*—"As your agent lectured for us in defence of the Church, I think it only right to write and say how pleased we were with the Lecture, and consider it to have been most useful. It was so thoroughly convincing. The Independent Minister seconded the vote of thanks, and was evidently not in any way aggrieved with what had been said, while he could not in any way gainsay the Lecturer's position."

*From an Incumbent in the North.*—"We are all delighted with your lecturer—our opponents think him very clever and very courteous. We must form a Defence Association in this district. An old parish subdivided into four or five ecclesiastical districts. I will subscribe a guinea a year, and as soon as we can organize, will send you all subjects I can get. Kindly forward me all plans for organization, and the Liberation Society's "scheme."

*A Layman in the neighbourhood of Blackheath* reports.—"That at a debate held in the Congregational Chapel there, but open to the public, and at which the Treasurer of the Liberation Society presided, a resolution in favour of Disestablishment was lost by 22 votes to 19. This result he attributes to the distribution of papers forwarded by the Church Defence Institution, and to the information supplied to the mover and others for their speeches.

#### THE CHURCH DEFENCE INSTITUTION :

The work of the Church Defence Institution is greatly impeded from the want of a proper staff to complete its organization throughout the country. The Church Defence Institution seeks, by means of Archidiaconal, Ruri-decanal, and Town Branches, to diffuse sound information on Church questions amongst all classes of the people. This, however, it can only at present very imperfectly accomplish. To carry out the demands at present made upon its resources the Institution should have—

I. In the Southern Province (Canterbury):

Two organizing Secretaries, and  
Two competent Lecturers.

Of these, the Institution has at present one organizing Secretary, but no salaried Lecturer. Occasional lectures are given from time to time.

II. In the Northern Province (York) it requires:

One organizing Secretary, and  
Three competent Lecturers.

Of these the Institution has one excellent Lecturer, by whom a series of Lectures is given in the North throughout the year, but no organizing Secretary.

Constant applications are made for grants of the Publications of the Institution, which it is only enabled most inadequately to supply.

A number of Debating Societies and Miniature Parliaments exist throughout the country, in which the Church and State question is constantly discussed. A large supply of sound publications on such occasions would be of great benefit; but at present only a meagre parcel can be forwarded.

Constant proofs are afforded of the educational benefit arising from the circulation of "The National Church." This circulation is however greatly restricted from want of means to increase it. The circulation of each number varies from 15,000 to 20,000. It is believed that by use of the proper machinery it could be increased to 100,000.

For such purposes as these the Institution needs largely increased support. Its annual income at present from subscriptions and donations is barely £3,000 a-year. To carry out the scheme mentioned above, this should be increased to at least £7,500 a-year.

It is proposed that this should be done (1) By causing a special appeal under competent authority. (2) By urging the Clergy to give offertories and sermons on behalf of the Institution. (3) By increasing the list of annual subscribers through the extension of branches of the Institution both in town and country.









